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Newsletter of the Montana  
Office of Public Instruction  
Nancy Keenan, Superintendent  
Vol. 40, No. 2

## Under Construction 2

OPI staff do their jobs under less-than-perfect circumstances.

## Session preparations 3

This session OPI has put together two priorities for educational funding.

## Participatory learning 4

Law-Related Education and Service Learning projects provide students with the chance to get involved and learn.

## Adult Literacy Award 5

The Willard Adult Education Center in Missoula receives a national award.

## Field Notes 6

A Kalispell elementary teacher relates her experiences in virtual reality.

## Earthly adventures 7

Digging for fossils and "Exploring a World of Habitats" in Montana.

## A shot in the arm 8

The requirements for student immunization are outlined.

## NetDay Montana 7

Huntley Project gets wired on October 26th.

## Dispatches 10

Updates from OPI specialists.

And More . . .

## Respect and action key to youth violence Adults listen to students at Kids' Council on Character meeting

A little respect can go a long way toward solving some of the more pressing problems faced by students, schools, and communities in Montana, according to the discussion between the 24 council members and the 24 adult respondents who participated in the first Kids' Council on Character meeting held October 10-11, 1996.

### Kids speak, adults listen

Cosponsored by State Superintendent Nancy Keenan, the Montana Parent Teacher Association, and the Montana Broadcasters Association (MBA), the council meeting was designed to give students and adults the chance to sit down with one another and discuss common concerns—from the students' point of view.

Before television cameras and an audience of over 100 adults who, among others, represented parents, teachers, coaches, elected officials, law enforcement, and the media, Kids' Council members shared their concerns and answered adult respondents' questions based on their experiences as Montana students in

grades 5-9.

The topics ranged widely, but focused on what council members think contributes to youth violence, disciplinary problems, and students' unhealthy choices. They also offered possible solutions to some of those problems.

(Continued on page 4)

## Youth for Justice Summit held in Helena

This November 15-16, 40 students from eight communities in Montana came to Helena to participate in a two-day Youth Summit about the topic: "Youth Violence: Searching for Solutions."

Made possible by a partnership between the Office of Public

Instruction (OPI), Youth for Justice, Learn and Serve Montana, and the Governor's Office of Community Service, the Youth Summit was designed so that participants could discuss issues surrounding youth violence, identify possible solutions, and move toward preventative action.

When asked for her impression, Summer Beeks, a student from Polson High School, said, "I feel that the Summit was extremely beneficial. It helped me realize logical problem-solving strategies and solutions to major school and societal conflicts."

### Participants learn and serve

On Friday, the first day, adults and students split into separate groups for workshops and facilitated discussions. While students actively engaged in learning about leadership, conflict resolution, and mediation, adults attended informational sessions on Service Learning, Law-Related Education (LRE), and other programs in Montana.

(Continued on page 4)



Members of the Kids' Council on Character

## Good schools are no accident OPI sets legislative priorities

Research into best practices in education leaves no doubt that students learn the most and perform the best when they are presented with challenging academic materials in a safe and nurturing setting.

"Those research findings make sense—they certainly reflect my experiences, not only as a teacher, but also as a learner," said State Superintendent of Public Instruction Nancy Keenan.

"So," Keenan added, "we Montanans need to ask ourselves the following questions: *How can we ensure that our schools are safe and nurturing?* and *How can we*

*make sure we provide academic challenges to every student enrolled in our public schools?*"

### Education and the 55th Legislature

During the 1997 legislative session, Keenan intends to work hard to keep these two questions central to the legislative debate over educational policies and the allocation of state resources.

It won't be easy; the upcoming session has already been labeled by many as the "Session of Corrections." Keenan hopes that all members of the educational community will be vigilant and vocal during the approaching session. "It's up to us to make

sure that our children and schools are not shortchanged in the legislative process," she said.

"Teachers, principals, parents, grandparents, businesspeople, and everyone else concerned about Montana's kids need to remind their legislators that education provides opportunity," said Keenan. "It is the best deterrent we know to the poverty and crime that cripples the lives of so many of our children and citizens. Funding for education should be viewed as an investment in our children and our democratic future."

(continued on page 3)

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## Message from Nancy Keenan

### Some reflections on 1996

December has always struck me as a good time to sit back and take stock—both of the past year and my hopes for the year ahead. Frankly, however, I'm finding it hard to believe that it's already the holiday season. Many of you probably feel the same way. But, back to 1996 in review.

Over the past year, a number of exciting educational projects have either taken form or gained momentum. These projects offer productive, positive activities that bring various community members, schools, and students together. For more detailed information check out the articles in this issue of *Montana Schools* on the Kids' Council on Character, the Youth Justice Summit, and NetDay Montana (pages 1,4, and 9 respectively).



Each of these projects stress community involvement in education. As a result, they open up the lines of communication and build the foundation for mutual respect and cooperation, whether it be between community members and the school or between students and the adults in their lives.

I believe that working together is not only the key to recognizing common goals, it is also the first step toward understanding one another. When

teachers, parents, students, and other community members come together on behalf of schools and education, everyone benefits.

Although this column calls attention to three of the statewide projects currently underway in Montana, there are many other exemplary local projects going on in schools and communities across the state.

These projects represent an exciting beginning to the New Year. Providing our students with the best education possible, however, is a never-ending task. We still have a lot of work to do, and 1997 is bound to present us with additional challenges and opportunities.

I wish all of you a happy and healthy holiday season. I hope you take time to have fun with your family and friends and recharge your batteries. I look forward to our working together in the New Year and meeting all the challenges and surprises it has in store for us.

Best Wishes,

*Nancy Keenan*

## Two Montana teachers design educational CD-ROM

The rural isolation of eastern Montana was no deterrent to two of Miles City's Title I math teachers, Sandy Cameron and Jan Nesbit. When they were unable to find materials that met the new National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM) standards, they developed their own.

With Title I guidelines changing, Cameron and Nesbit began teaching collaboratively in their regular classrooms. Soon their colleagues recognized that the games designed by this duo were superior to other available materials and began asking to use them. That led Cameron and Nesbit to the idea of marketing their games.

### Marketing, no simple strategy

After several years of contacting and traveling to various game board publishers, to no avail, Cameron and Nesbit began contacting educational software publishing companies.

A small software company, Hartley, liked their games and agreed to program and market several of them. Unfortunately, economics came into play; a large conglomerate, Jostens, purchased Hartley, and the duo's programs were "back burned." With no commitment from Jostens, they were back to square one and started to approach publishers once again.

Upon seeing the design of some of their math games, Lawrence Productions and Prentice Hall agreed to publish and distribute several of their math games. The first product is the software game CD-ROM, *Mystery Math Island*.

### The game itself

Available for both Macintosh and IBM platforms, *Mystery Math*

*Island* can be purchased by both educators and other consumers. "With it," as one reviewer explained, "students can work in groups or individually to develop skills in six content areas: Geometry, Measurement, Data Pattern, Problem-solving, Number Sense, and Operations." *Mystery Math Island* is designed to meet all 13 of the NCTM standards for grades 3-8 and features more than 1,000 math problems in several areas.

To play, students must find the treasures buried by a band of pirates on the island before the pirates return. A teacher's manual is available with several hands-on activities that supplement the *Mystery Math Island* software game. When students complete the game, a printout tells them how well they met the national standards in each category.

Cameron and Nesbit wrote all of the math. Nesbit notes that they designed the game to include lots of "hands-on, manipulative-type skills, like dice and probability."

### More games to come

Prentice Hall is currently in the process of publishing three more of Cameron's and Nesbit's math games in game board format. Those games also meet all 13 of the NCTM standards.

The duo intend to keep improving the quality of math materials available to Montana students and teachers.

"We're committed to Montana education, and we believe there's no better way to share our enthusiasm and ideas with others in the educational community," says Cameron. ■

For more information on *Mystery Math Island* contact either Cameron (232-4478) or Nesbit (232-5266).

## OPI staff contends with major construction

BUZZ, CRASH, BANG! The Office of Public Instruction (OPI) buildings are getting a facelift. Saws, jack-hammers, and drills have been raising the dust, and raising the curiosity of the education community of Montana when contacting OPI staff. What is all the noise?

Disturbances by ongoing construction to OPI office facilities will be interrupting phone and computer conversations from time to time as changes are being made. When these occur, the interruptions should be very brief, and OPI's services to the public will continue to operate as normal as possible.

Over the next seven months, the four OPI office buildings will be under major construction. As a result, many OPI employees will

### Certification renewal reminder

Reminder. The renewal date for teacher certificates has been changed. Teachers, whose certificates expire in June, can start to renew as of January 1, 1997. If you have questions or need an application to renew, please call OPI Certification (444-3150).

move to a new location. Here's the scoop! Our two-story building at 1300 11th Avenue has acquired new heating and air conditioning units, as well as roof and parking-lot improvements. The 1228 11th Avenue building, which currently houses our School Foods Division, will be demolished. Montana's State Capitol is also undergoing renovation. The plans at the Capitol call for the OPI Administrative and Legal staff to vacate their space and

find a new home. Consequently, the building at 1227 11th Avenue is being remodeled, and a 7000-

square-foot top floor is being added. If construction proceeds as scheduled, OPI staff should be moving into their designated locations by late May 1997.

When all the dust settles and the noise subsides, OPI will be in two, two-story buildings residing at either 1227 or 1300 11th Avenue. In the meantime, we'll turn up the volume! ■

—Karen Mulcahy, OPI

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# Good schools, cont.

To focus the discussion on how to maintain the quality and improve our public schools, the Office of Public Instruction (OPI) has organized its legislative agenda around four basic goals for education in Montana (see box below).

To achieve these goals, OPI has set two clear priorities for education funding. The first priority is to increase state funding for school district general fund budgets. The second priority is a School Improvement package to provide leadership and technical assistance to school districts as they strive to improve and expand learning opportunities for Montana students.

## Base funding tops list

OPI's number one priority for the 1997 legislative session is to increase state support for schools by increasing the basic and per-student entitlements by 4.5 percent. This increase is projected to cost \$39 million for the two-year period 1997-99. This amount is in addition to the \$19.2 million increase required to cover projected public school enrollment growth at the current level of state funding.

## Why increase base funding

An increase in the state appropriation for K-12 education will provide resources that are needed to help schools address a host of challenges they currently confront. These challenges include

- ✓ overcrowded classrooms;
- ✓ educating students with aggressive and disruptive behaviors while protecting the

safety and learning environment for students who come to school "ready to learn;"

- ✓ limitations in academic course offerings and program alternatives;
- ✓ lack of resources for teacher training, especially in the area of educational technology;
- ✓ guaranteeing educational opportunities and services for special needs children; and
- ✓ taxpayer frustration with increases in school tax levies.

Public schools in Montana are now operating on fewer state dollars per pupil than they were in fiscal year 1991 (FY91). An increase in the public school entitlements will reduce the burden on local property taxpayers and help keep pace with inflation, while addressing both safety issues and the concerns crowded classrooms pose for loss of a quality learning environment.

## State support for education

The state share of funding for school general fund budgets has declined steadily over the past seven years, from 71 percent in

**District property tax levies for school general fund budgets have increased ... \$108 million or 144 percent in six years.**

FY91 to 64 percent in FY97.

During that time, state funding for district general fund budgets has by grown by \$13.6 million since 1991, from \$407 million in FY91 to \$420.6 million in FY97. That is an increase of only 3.3 percent in six years, an amount that does not keep pace with inflation, let alone enrollment growth.

## Local taxpayers take up slack in state funding for schools

As the state share of public school funding has declined, district taxpayers have assumed that funding burden through property tax increases. It is important to note that, in general, these tax increases required voter approval and demonstrate the desire and willingness of the Montana public to preserve and improve the high quality of Montana's public schools.

The fact remains, however, that district property tax levies for school general fund budgets have increased from \$75.5 million in FY91 to \$184 million in FY97, an increase of \$108 million or 144 percent in six years.

"It's no wonder that local

## Legislative Priorities

- #1** Increase the basic and per-student entitlements by 4.5 percent in 1997-98, the first year of the coming biennium.
- #2** Put in place a school improvement proposal that
  - promotes challenging academic standards;
  - increases accountability to and the involvement of the public;
  - enhances educational opportunities through access to technology; and
  - promotes effective school-to-work initiatives.

property taxpayers are confused and frustrated with property tax increases—for six years, they have been picking up the state's tab," stated Superintendent Keenan. "Most people don't realize that

**The state share of funding for school general fund budgets has declined steadily over the past seven years, from 71 percent in FY91 to 64 percent in FY97.**

the actual reason for the increase in their property tax is not because their local school has drastically increased its spending. It's because of the funding burden has been shifted from state to local sources."

In fact, the fiscal data reported by schools shows that property taxes have, on the average, increased 10 times faster than school budgets. School district budgets have grown by 15 percent in six years, or about 1.5 percent per year—a rate of growth which, Keenan notes, is "very modest given the enrollment increases that we have seen since 1991."

## Enrollment numbers

Preliminary enrollment reports for this school year indicate that the number of children and youth attending Montana's public schools has grown from 152,898 in FY91 to 164,560 in FY97, an increase of 11,662 pupils. Since the state has not provided K-12 public schools with the financial assistance to keep pace with inflation, real spending for education, including classroom instruction, has declined.

## School Improvement Proposal

OPI's number two priority for the 1997 legislative session is a School Improvement Proposal. This is a \$1.6 million request to promote challenging academic standards; increase the accountability to and the involvement of the public; enhance educational opportunities through access to technology; and promote effective school-to-work initiatives.

Some of the proposal's specifics include a review of the model learner goals associated with the state accreditation standards; the development of educational

profiles for the state's K-12 system and individual school districts; enhancements to METNET; technical assistance for districts to plan for the efficient use of technological resources; increased opportunities for educators to use technology as a teaching and learning tool; and help for schools trying to plan for effective school-to-work initiatives.

## Legislative information

The governor's budget request to the 1997 legislature includes \$19.2 million to cover enrollment increases and \$16 million to fund a 3.5 percent increase in the base funding for schools in 1998-99, the second year of the upcoming biennium.

Along with other members of the Montana Education Forum, including (among others) the School Administrators of Montana, Montana School Boards Association, the Montana Rural Education Association, the Montana Board of Public Education, OPI will be supporting legislation to increase schools' base funding by 4.5 percent in 1997-98, keeping school entitlements at the new level the second year of the upcoming biennium.

Many other bill requests affect-

**"Most people don't realize that the actual reason for the increase in their property tax is this shift in the funding burden from state to local sources."**

**—Nancy Keenan**

ing education in Montana have also been submitted. To stay on top of proposed and pending legislation, committee assignments, and other legislative information, check out the *Legislative Data* folder on METNET's desktop or, starting January 6, 1997, call the Legislative Information Office (444-4800). You can also call and leave a message for your legislator at that number. ■

—Madalyn Quinlan, OPI, Chief of Staff

Prior to assuming her current position as Chief of Staff, Madalyn Quinlan was OPI's Revenue Analyst for six years.

## OPI's basic goals for education in Montana

**I**mproving the teaching and learning environment by adequately funding education programs for students in Montana public schools.

**E**stablishing high academic standards for teaching and learning and providing the public with a means of assessing the quality and achievements of Montana's public schools.

**P**romoting the use of technology resources to expand educational opportunities in Montana, as well as improve the access to and management of information and education-related data.

**E**nsuring the safety of students in Montana public schools by promoting a nurturing school environment and safe school facilities.



# Students apply principles of law and learn about the legal system

Essentially, Law-Related Education (LRE) is a high-quality civics education program for students of all ages. Through LRE, students undertake age-appropriate activities that allow them to explore, experience, and understand such concepts as authority, responsibility, justice, privacy, and other principles fundamental to our democracy.

For example, younger students might explore the concept of justice by reading the "Fair Bears" story and doing activities that help them focus upon the issue of fairness. Older students might examine actual court cases and role play a Supreme Court hearing.

## LRE goal and philosophy

The goal of the LRE is to acquaint students with the United States' legal system. The program's underlying philosophy is that students who understand the system are more apt to feel they can make a difference by participating in the United States' legal system, as well as its governmental and social systems.

As a result, those students are less likely to use drugs or engage in violent behavior, and they often view law enforcement officials more positively as a result. In addition, students learn how to

recognize ways to mediate conflict before it escalates.

## Program funding

Until recently, the federal Department of Justice provided funds to train teachers in LRE curricula and teaching strategies.

reduction over previous years.

## Youth summit on violence

For the previous two years, the Montana's youth summit was conducted via the Montana Educational Telecommunications Network (METNET) interactive

two-day, on-site Youth for Justice Summit that combined both the resources and concepts of the LRE and Service Learning programs (see related story on page 1).

Summit participants left Helena with concrete action plans that they hope to implement in their local communities. As the result of a mini-grant offered through OPI's Health Enhancement and Safety Division, the LRE program has been awarded funds that will make it possible for these students to meet again in the spring to discuss their progress and report on their action plans.

## LRE Program information

The LRE program is coordinated through OPI's Professional and Academic Services Division. As a result of the previous years of teacher training, there is a cadre of trainers in Montana who specialize in the various LRE curriculums and are willing to act as resources for schools and teachers. ■

—Michael Hall, OPI, LRE Program Coordinator

*If you are interested in learning more about the LRE program, the Youth Summit for Justice, or would like a list of LRE trainers and LRE schools, please call Michael Hall (444-4422).*

## The benefits of education through action

Programs and projects like Kids on Character, Law Related Education (LRE) and the Service Learning Project are organized around the principles of student participation.

By actively involving students in projects in the community (Service Learning); allowing them to actively learn about the processes and principles with which our legal system operates (LRE); or soliciting their input (Kids on Character), students not only gain

valuable knowledge, they become a contributing part of their community and gain respect for themselves and other members of their community.

Students—or anyone—who understand the system and feel that they can make a difference by participating are less likely to be involved in violence or other destructive behavior. Usually they also have a more positive view of individuals in positions of authority.

Although this model was very successful, most of the federal money once allocated to LRE has been shifted to other funding priorities.

Currently, Montana receives \$4,000 a year to provide a youth summit on violence. This amount reflects more than a 60 percent

video system. While the METNET system has its limitations, it proved an effective way to minimize travel while still connecting students from across the state.

## Youth for Justice Summit

This year, organizers opted for a

## Kids' Council on Character: Montana students talk about character and youth violence

Continued from page 1

### Some comments

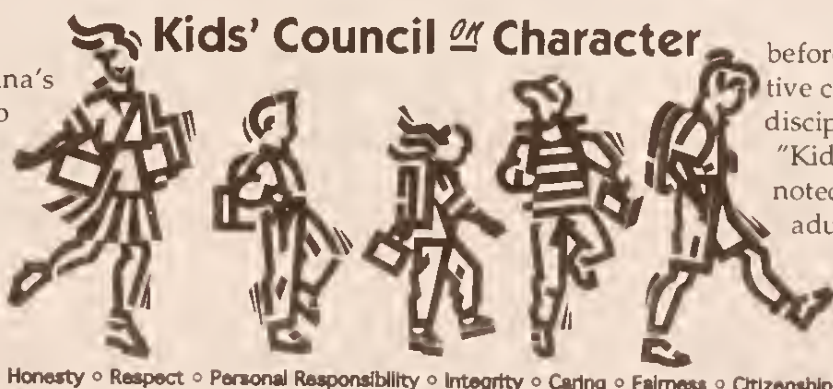
Although most of Montana's children and youth want to be honest, fair, caring, and responsible, it's not always easy. Nor, said council members, are their efforts always recognized or rewarded.

Often peer pressure forces them in the opposite direction; many council members noted it was "cool" to be mean to others, to fight, to get bad grades, to make life miserable for their teachers, to drink and smoke. In addition, council members all expressed the opinion that adults seemed to dwell on kids' bad behavior, while rarely acknowledging their good behavior. In fact, council members suggested that adults—whether teachers, parents, shopkeepers, etc.—always tended to expect the worst and were, in their experience, often unwilling to listen to kids' side of the story.

Many council members pointed to the media as a good example, saying that newspapers and television news always ran stories featuring kids' mistakes, but gave little coverage to kids' accomplishments and positive efforts in areas other than athletics.

### Respect is common denominator

Although their comments were, at times, almost brutally honest,



Honesty • Respect • Personal Responsibility • Integrity • Caring • Fairness • Citizenship

council members made the effort to respond openly and non-confrontationally. State Superintendent Nancy Keenan noted that council members "were excited by the chance to present their points of view to a group of adults who clearly were listening, responding, and respecting their opinions."

Many of the solutions suggested by council members revolve around the concept of respect. "Youth violence starts out small, in a lack of respect on the playground," said Keenan. "It starts as putdowns and mean-spirited teasing. These reveal a lack of respect for others' feelings that can, if unchecked, escalate into a lack of respect for authority, other people's property, and the law."

Council members indicated that students would find it a great source of support and strength if adults would respect their opinions, feelings, efforts, and accomplishments, solicit student input, and listen to all sides of a story

before jumping to negative conclusions or taking disciplinary action.

"Kids learn by example," noted Keenan. "If the adults in their lives respect them and their ideas, kids will not only learn to respect others, they will also

believe that they, too, are worthy of respect. That would, I believe, cause kids to think twice about bad decisions and destructive

behavior."

### Kids on Character

The Kids' Council on Character was the second stage in the Kids on Character project. In the first stage, Keenan traveled to 12 communities around the state, met with, and listened to nearly 600 students in grades 3-8 discuss how core, bedrock ethics such as honesty, personal responsibility, integrity, fairness, caring, respect,

(Continued on page 5)

## Youth Summit

Continued from page 1

On Saturday, the second day of the Summit, participants rolled up their sleeves and put some of those concepts to work. The morning was reserved for a service learning project at the Canyon Ferry Limnological Institute (see story on page 6).

Students and adults raked leaves to keep the storm drain system working, hauled wood to the campfire area, cleaned up the tennis courts, moved bookcases, and arranged the library books into Dewey Decimal order. During the afternoon, students and adults from the same communities worked together to develop a service project directed at

preventing or reducing violence in their school.

### Plan for action

Students from Boulder, Butte, Bozeman, Helena, Kalispell, Laurel, Polson, and Missoula attended the Summit. Each group of students developed a project to implement in their own community.

For example, the Polson students are going to put on a cultural fair to encourage cross-cultural understanding in their community, and Helena Middle School students are going to create posters and a quilt to draw attention to youth violence. ■



# Service learning combines community service and education

When you hear the term "service learning" do you think, "Oh, I do that when I take my class out to pick up trash in the park"?

Although picking up trash is a good and noble activity, service learning is more than a one-day project or a culminating activity for a unit. Instead it should be an integral part of learning in the classroom, not just an add-on.

Service learning projects emphasize both the service and the learning. Learning is the centerpiece—learning important academic content. In a well-designed project, students learn skills that will equip them for higher education and the world of work. Through service learning, students acquire those "habits of heart" that will help them become contributing members of a community.

## A teaching technique

Service learning is a teaching technique that you can add to your repertoire to make learning more engaging and meaningful for your students, while helping them learn specific skills and concepts.

By involving students in hands-on learning, problem-solving, and applying their academic knowledge in real-life settings, service learning can increase students' academic achievement in challenging subjects. Service learning projects provide a mechanism for teaching and assessing the application of the core curriculum, while teaching and reinforcing job readiness skills and career options.

## Student benefits

Service experiences help students see connections between the classroom and the community. Service learning provides opportunities for students to apply what they are learning to community needs. Students who engage in community service develop and practice citizenship skills, as well as effective thinking and problem-solving skills. As one student commented, "the confidence I've gained volunteering will help me for the rest of my life."

In addition, service projects provide positive visibility for schools and students.

## Service learning projects

A service learning project is specifically designed to meet curriculum goals. Essential components of a K-12 service learning project are:

- ✓ to meet a genuine need in the community;
- ✓ to develop student ownership in the project;
- ✓ to involve the community in designing the project;
- ✓ to help students master their subject matter and develop skills;
- ✓ to involve collaboration

- between the community and school; and
- ✓ to provide opportunities for students to reflect on what they are doing and learning.

## Curriculum integration

Various portions of service learning projects can support or reinforce portions of the basic curriculum being taught in K-12 classrooms. A few examples from the November/December 1996 issue of *Learning* are listed below.

**Math**—Collect grocery coupons for your local food bank. **Science**—Develop a bird sanctuary and provide tours as part of a study of birds and migration. **Health**—Plan a nutritious meal and go grocery shopping for a senior citizen; teach first aid to younger students and the

public. **Arts**—design public spaces such as parks, playgrounds or malls; research and write plays around current events or community issues. **Technology**—Train community members in computer use; run computer programs with local farmers/ranchers or non-profit organization staff. **Industrial Arts**—Build specialized equipment like wheelchair ramps for disabled people; repair small

engines for senior citizens or low-income people. ■

June Atkins, OPI, Learn and Serve Montana, Program Coordinator

For further information and a list of Montana K-12 Learn and Serve Projects and contact names, call or send June Atkins (Tel: 444-3664; email: [jatkins@opi.mt.gov](mailto:jatkins@opi.mt.gov)) an email message.

## Learn and Serve mini-grant competition

Learn and Serve Competitive Mini-grants applications are now available. The mini-grants are to be used to implement, operate, or expand K-12 school-based service learning programs. Awards will range from \$500-\$3,000, depending upon the scope of the project or program. Call June Atkins (444-3664) for an application. Projects must be completed by June 30, 1997, and Mini-Grant applications are due by 5:00 p.m. on Friday, January 17, 1997.

## Adult learning center receives national award Missoula's Willard School's outstanding work recognized

This fall, the Adult Learning Center based at Missoula's Willard School received the 1996 Secretary's Award from the U.S. Department of Education for its outstanding work in adult education and literacy.

"Receiving this award," said Keenan, "establishes Missoula's Willard Adult Learning Center as one of the 12 best adult education centers in the entire nation." The Secretary's Award is presented every two years; this year, only 12 programs across the nation were recognized.

**"Receiving this award establishes Missoula's Willard Adult Learning Center as one of the 12 best adult education centers in the entire nation."**

**—Nancy Keenan**

## Adult education so important

"Adult Education programs do

not often make headlines, but the services they provide to individuals and communities are so important," said Keenan. "They provide people with the chance to learn how to read and write, get their GED, and prepare for a good job. Most importantly, though," she noted, "programs like the Willard Adult Learning Center give people the chance to reach their goals and realize their dreams."

## Star student

One person whose dreams were helped along by the Willard Adult Learning Center is Fumiko Dudnick. Dudnick is a 50-year-old native of Japan who married a U.S. Marine and came to the United States over 20 years ago.

Dudnick studied for both her GED and her naturalization exam at Willard. She obtained her GED and became a U.S. citizen in time to vote in her first U.S. Election this fall. She is planning to start college-level classes in January.

Dudnick was one of two people who were asked to present their life's story at the national reception where the 1996 Secretary Awards were presented.

## Keenan honors Willard

At a special reception she held for the Willard Adult Learning Center in Helena, Keenan congratulated Dudnick on her success and praised Carl Sandell, director of the Adult Education Center, for the many ways his program excels and

**"Programs like the Willard Adult Learning Center give people the chance to reach their goals and realize their dreams."**

**—Nancy Keenan**

for the assistance it provides.

"From my visits there, I've known that the Willard Adult Learning Center was an exceptional facility that has helped many people in the Missoula community," said Keenan. "You and your staff clearly deserve the national acclaim. Thank you for all of the time and effort you put into making other people's dreams come true." ■

## Kids' Council on Character

Continued from page 4

and citizenship apply to their lives.

## Future plans

A production crew from the Montana Broadcasters Association brought in television cameras and filmed the entire council meeting. That footage will be used to produce a series of public service announcements featuring council members outlining their defini-

tion of those core ethics. The announcements will be available to MBA member stations for airing, starting next year.

In addition, a portion of the Kids' Council on Character meeting was dedicated to a strategy session where council members and adults came up with possible ways to carry the message back to their communities.

## Other programs

Kids' Council members might also be able to attend a Youth Justice Summit meeting this spring. The Summit is a joint effort including two other similar programs: Law-Related Education and the Service Learning Project (see pages 4 and 5). Like Kids on Character, these programs take an active, student-centered approach to battling youth violence. ■



# Taking a spin on the Magic School Bus

*Kalispell teacher relays her experiences in Virtual Reality in Education workshop*

Last July, MSU-Bozeman graduate student Bob Fixen and I were chosen to attend a Virtual Reality in Education workshop, which was part of the Research Science Education (RSE) program at the National Center for Supercomputing Applications (NCSA).

The RSE program promotes curriculum development between visiting educators and NCSA staff and researchers, as well as helps distribute this information via the Internet. Held at the University of Illinois—Urbana-Champaign (UIUC), the two-week workshop brought Bob and I together with ten educators from five other states, who are also working to integrate virtual reality (VR) technology into existing curricula.

## Reflections on the workshop

Although Kalispell and Urbana-Champaign are only about 1,700 miles apart, I actually have travelled a great distance along the information superhighway to arrive at NCSA. In part, my electronic journey is thanks to my participation these past two years in the Reach For the Sky project and a grant from the US WEST Foundation and the Annenberg/CPB Science and Math project.

As an elementary teacher in Kalispell, Montana, I feel very fortunate to be able to participate in this project. The opportunities these two weeks offered to learn about Virtual Reality Modeling Language (VRML), explore VR equipment, and interact with other teachers, scientists and researchers involved in the RSE program were invaluable.

Even the Illinois summer humidity couldn't dampen my enthusiasm this summer.

## Virtual reality equipment

At NCSA, we had the opportunity to explore the latest projection-based VR equipment like the CAVE, the Infinity Wall, and the Immersa Desk.

The CAVE is basically a 10-foot cube composed of display screens surrounding the viewer. The illusion of total immersion is created by projecting three-dimensional (3D) computer graphics onto the screens and using surround sound paired with head and hand-tracking systems.

The Infinity Wall is a scaled-up version of the cave. While current tracking is limited to one person, this 3D display has a screen large enough for an entire audience.

**“The virtual reality field trips of Mrs. Frizzle and the Magic School Bus series can't be far behind.”**

Unlike the CAVE, the Wall's images appear on only one plane. The stereoscopic glasses give the illusion of 3D.

The Immersa Desk is a virtual prototyping device designed as a single-user station. Using stereoglasses along with head and hand tracking, this system offers a semi-immersive VR experience.

## Demonstrations by leaders in VR

Leading scientists working with VR in various fields—from meteorology to art and design to mathematics—spent great lengths of time visiting with program participants. The speakers were intense and informative, and the potential applications of VR for

teaching and learning was, at times, overwhelming.

Following is a sampling of some of the speakers and their topics:

- *Dr. Robert Wilhelmson*, a professor of meteorology, demonstrated a 3D moving image of a storm simulation.

- One of NASA's leading physicists, *Dr. R.B. Loftin*, shared how a series of controlled experiments can be used to assess the potential impact of VR in science education.

- *Bob Patterson* and *Donna Cox*, a professor of art and design, used the CAVE to depict a sequence of a nearly homogenous universe expanding and evolving a fraction of a second after the Big Bang. They then shared the exciting technology behind the sequence with our group.

- By using computer brain models to demonstrate anatomical trauma, *Rita Addison*, a conceptual artist, showed how VR can benefit medical imaging. She has created a VR experience in which her pre-accident photographic art is reconfigured to simulate the perceptual damage she sustained in a car accident.

- *Dr. George Francis*, a UIUC mathematics professor, demonstrated a CAVE exercise he developed in which people can experience various geometrical wonders. For example, students can walk into a dodecahedron, play with a 3D snail-shaped shadow of soap film, or sew the edges of octagons together in his project.

In short, there was a lot of information to absorb in two short

weeks. The workshop was exhausting but very rewarding.

## Benefits for Montana students

So, how can the VR technology I experienced and the knowledge I brought back from Illinois be applied to Montana education?

When I asked my fellow Montanan, Bob Fixen, what he found most thrilling about the workshop, he replied that he was “very excited about the potential for student collaboration in a VR environment.”

A doctoral candidate in Mathematics Education at MSU-Bozeman, Bob is a teaching assistant and a research assistant for the Network Montana Project. He is currently busy creating a landscape of Yellowstone Park for students with embedded codes allowing the viewer to dive under the geysers and explore beneath the earth's surface.

Among our group's proposed undertakings are virtual landscapes of Mars, Yellowstone National Park, the Mississippi River Valley, and the Cahokia Mounds area. These educational projects target various age levels from elementary school to junior college.

Also under consideration are student-constructed VRML projects that will enable many teachers to dispense VR to their pupils. Meteorology simulations, maps, and navigated journeys will also acquire form.

The virtual reality field trips of Mrs. Frizzle and the Magic School Bus series can't be far behind.

## School-based VR project

Unlike Bob, who has access to

(continued on page 8)

# CFLI is much more than a summer science camp

*New lease allows Canyon Ferry Limnological Institute to formulate long-term plans*

This summer, after years of negotiation, the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation officially gave the state of Montana title to the Bureau's buildings in Canyon Ferry Village, located near Helena on Canyon Ferry Lake. The site will be administered by the Office of Public Instruction (OPI) and be used to support public education and research opportunities.

Simultaneous to the title transfer, OPI arranged for the Canyon Ferry Limnological Institute (CFLI) to lease the property and to assume all costs associated with the transfer.

## Long-range plans possible

CFLI has been working out of the buildings since 1984 and has long sought use of the site on a permanent basis. The 20-year,

renewable lease finally gives CFLI the chance to develop and implement long-range plans, since the Institute will now be able to amortize infrastructure and capital expense costs over a reasonable time frame.

CFLI board members are eager to explore new ways to develop the CFLI facility and provide students with increased educational opportunities in science and math.

Due to its location on Canyon Ferry Lake, CFLI is uniquely suited to provide students and teachers with the chance to gain a greater understanding of the various issues surrounding natural resource management.

## Great educational opportunities

At CFLI, high school students can learn how to use gas chroma-

tography, infrared spectrophotometry, UV-vis spectrometry, and atomic absorption spectrometry, as well as computer-based laboratory interfaces. In fact, the Institute houses the largest, most up-to-date assemblage of chemical instruments available for high school student use in Montana.

The Institute also offers both residential and nonresidential research programs for high school science students throughout the calendar year.

Similarly, CFLI can provide student groups with natural history tours of Canyon Ferry Lake, trips to the White's Gulch mine reclamation site, and courses for students in grades 5-12.

Since it has classrooms, laboratories, and dormitories, the site serves as a perfect location for educational retreats. CFLI will

work with teachers and administrators to develop workshops, conferences, and courses at a reasonable cost.

## Affordable Student Lodging

The Institute also offers affordable overnight accommodations for students and groups who travel to Helena to view the gathering of eagles below Canyon Ferry Dam or to observe the Montana State Legislature in action. The Institute has four buildings outfitted as dormitories, and can house up to 60 students and chaperones at one time. ■

*Inquiries regarding opportunities and costs should be made by calling or writing Marilyn Alexander at the Limnological Institute (tel: 475-3638; fax: 475-3871; email: CFLI@metnet.mt.gov).*



# Fun and adventure in Bynum

## Dinosaurs create a great educational opportunity

**A**re you or your class ready to venture back into Montana's prehistoric past? Are you ready for an adventure in which you might discover buried treasure and uncover traces of our state's former inhabitants? If your answer is "yes," then grab your phone and call Timescale Adventures.

Located in the Bynum-Choteau area of Montana, this tax-exempt public organization offers dinosaur programs tailored to provide a unique educational experience for children of all ages. "All children love dinosaurs," paleontologist Dave Trexler said, "and some of us just never grow up!"

### Some background information

Timescale Adventures is dedicated to scientific research and public education. Although the organization sponsors research and seminars on many different topics, paleontology and

dinosaurs are by far the most popular, especially with kids.

Paleontology seminars offered by Timescale Adventures are taught primarily by Dave Trexler, a professional paleontologist, and his wife Laurie, a professional fossil preparator. The Trexlers are responsible for the discoveries of many significant dinosaur fossils over the years, including the type specimen of *Maiasaura peeblesorum* and the first associated skull and skeleton of *Maiasaura*.

### In the field and in schools

Timescale Adventures encourages children to participate in their programs, and there is no minimum age limit. In addition, the organization has created a traveling dinosaur seminar for presentations at schools around the state and across the nation.

"We created these programs to help 'bridge the gap' between the professionals and the public," Trexler explained. "So many

times, the only access people have to this information is through news articles and television programs. Often, these sources report only the highlights, and information becomes distorted."

In contrast, said Trexler, "Timescale Adventures tries to

provide enough background information so that people can better understand the rarity of some types of fossils and the tremendous amount of time and effort that goes into preserving even a single dinosaur specimen."

### Helping the public help paleontologists

Timescale Adventures also encourages the public's participation in paleontological field searches. "There are less than 100 professional dinosaur paleontologists in this country," notes Trexler, "and there are tens of millions of acres of potentially dinosaur-bearing badlands."

As a result, Trexler explains, it is impossible for professionals to find and collect even a small portion of the fossils that are exposed each year. As a result, many specimens are lost to erosion.

Trexler noted that "most scientifically significant dinosaur specimens have been found by amateurs, and we encourage amateurs to report any potentially significant sites."

The legal and ethical rules for collecting fossils are complex. Trexler urges anyone interested in searching for fossils to learn about the rules and regulations first. A portion of each seminar conducted by Timescale Adventures



Students uncover the secrets of the past

is dedicated to explaining the legalities and ethics of fossil collection.

### Unique offerings that are both educational and fun

Although many organizations across North America offer paleontological field programs, Trexler feels that the level of public involvement involved in Timescale Adventures' research projects is unique. Timescale Adventures operates under the precept that the more trained amateurs who are involved in recreational paleontological activities, the greater the chances are to find and preserve significant specimens rather than losing them to erosion.

"Besides," said Trexler, "dinosaurs are a lot of fun!!!" ■

For more information on Timescale Adventures, contact Dave Trexler in Choteau, MT (466-5410).



A paleontologist in training

## Students celebrate Geography Awareness Week

### Montana Geographic Alliance brings geographic awareness to Montana schools

**R**ecently, students across Montana observed Geography Awareness Week, November 17-23, by "Exploring A World of Habitats, Seeing a World of Difference," this year's theme.

### Annual celebration

Held the third week of November, the organizers of Geography Awareness Week, including the National Geography Society, hope this annual celebration of the wonders of geography will increase geographic awareness, both among students and the general public. Every state in the country is involved in the project, as well as Puerto Rico and parts of Canada.

### Montana's involvement

Members of the Montana Geographic Alliance spearhead the effort behind Geography Awareness Week in our state. In fact, in preparation for this year's celebration, two Alliance members, Doug Odell from Whitefish, and Jan Clouse from Missoula,

traveled to National Geographic Headquarters in Washington, D.C., for a seminar. They spent three weeks receiving intense instruction from such national and international groups as the World Wildlife Fund and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

The first two weeks of the training consisted of computer and lecture material; the last week they spent in the field in West Virginia, working in such diverse ecosystems as caves, forests, and wetlands. An overriding theme of the training was in maintaining biodiversity—the number and location of species—as crucial to a healthy home for all animals, including ourselves.

A portion of the seminar was dedicated to specialized media training in working to increase awareness of geography and Geography Awareness Week.

### Geography Awareness packets

Odell, Clouse, and other members of the Alliance prepared and distributed over 600 packets to

teachers throughout the state for their use in Geography Awareness Week this year. Though mailed primarily to members of the Alliance, this resource was available to all teachers.

Alliance members worked hard to involve as many teachers and students as possible in this year's Geography Awareness Week. They've already set their sights even higher for next year. ■

## The Montana Geographic Alliance

**E**stablished in 1992, the Montana Geographic Alliance is part of a larger network that includes all 50 states, Puerto Rico, and Canada. Its members are teachers, students, and citizens who are committed to the advancement of sound geographic information in the United States. The Alliance's sponsors are OPI, the University of Montana, and the National Geographic Society.

The Alliance attempts to fulfill its goals through a variety of means. Summer Geography Institutes are held yearly for teachers. The organization acts as a clearinghouse for geographic

resource materials and lesson plans. It also provides support in local schools or districts in establishing geographic curriculum.

Membership is open to students, teachers, administrators, education policymakers, and other individuals interested in promoting geographic knowledge. There are no membership dues. For a membership application or further information, please contact the Montana Geographic Alliance, Public Policy Research Institute, University of Montana, Missoula, MT 59812-1018 (243-5626) or call Linda Peterson at OPI (444-5726).



# State law requires students be immunized

Under the Montana Immunization Law (MCA 20-5-401) and the Administrative Rule of Montana (ARM 16.28701), the Montana Immunization Program within the Department of Public Health and Human Services (DPHHS) is responsible for helping county health departments and Montana schools monitor students' immunization status.

The law's aim is to curtail communicable diseases in Montana schools that can be prevented through proper vaccination.

## Immunization mandatory

Children may not attend school in Montana unless their school receives adequate documentation of immunization and the appropriate schedule for: diphtheria, pertussis, tetanus, polio, measles, rubella, and mumps vaccines. A child enrolling in a new school from another school, state, or country must present immunization documentation before attending school.

All 50 states and the District of Columbia have immunization requirements for children entering school, but the requirements vary

widely, and may not correspond to Montana law.

## Conditional enrollment

A student who does not meet school immunization entry requirements may be admitted to school on a conditional enrollment. The Conditional Attendance Form (HES 103-B, rev. 8/93) indicates the student has received one or more of the doses of each of the required vaccine(s), and will continue to receive the remaining doses on the schedule determined by the signing physician or health department.

## Two possible exemptions

When a student has a medical reason that makes a particular vaccine inadvisable, that child can go to school without that immunization if the school receives a written and signed statement from a physician specifying which immunization is contraindicated, for what period of time, and the specific nature of the medical condition.

The school must maintain this statement on the Certificate of Immunization (Form HES 101 Rev. 3/91).

The only other legal exemption from immunization is if the parent, guardian, or student objects to vaccination because of religious beliefs. Each year a form exempting the student from immunization because of religion (Form HES -113 rev. 8/89) must

be signed, notarized, and maintained in the student's school record.

## Documentation required

The Annual Immunization Status Report (Form HES -106) required of each school in Montana helps identify all pupils who are not fully immunized. This report is due by December 1 each year. In the case of a communicable disease outbreak in school, this report can assist school nurses and administrators in identifying those students who must be excluded.

## Assistance available

All the forms noted in this article are available from your county health department or the Montana Immunization Program. Our staff is available to answer your questions about the Immunization Law, the Administrative Rules, and the health of Montana's children. We may be reached by calling (444-5580), and asking for a health care specialist or the immunization nurse consultant. ■

—Joyce Burgett, Montana Immunization Program, DPHHS

## Did you know?

Montana state law requires the following immunizations for children to attend school:

- ✓ 4 doses of DTP (Diphtheria, Tetanus, Pertussis) with one after the fourth birthday;
- ✓ 3 doses of Polio vaccine (OPV or IPV) with one after the fourth birthday;
- ✓ 2 doses of MMR (Measles, Mumps, Rubella)—one after the first birthday and one prior to entry in middle school or junior high. The second dose must be separated from the first by at least one month.

## Federal act provides for rape prevention education for students

The recent federal Violence Against Women Act provides for increased funding to support rape prevention and education in Montana. Administered by the Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services (DPHHS), this new Act specifies that at least 25 percent of the funds be spent on education programs for middle, junior high, and senior high school students.

Currently, these federal dollars are funding 10 projects across the state that provide services to sexual assault victims, education for rape prevention, training programs for professionals,

resource materials, and operation of sexual assault crisis lines. The projects are in Billings, Butte, Conrad, Great Falls, Havre, Helena, Kalispell, Lewistown, Libby, and Missoula. A recent competitive process has led to project proposals for Miles City, Polson, Scobey, Thompson Falls, Hamilton, and some statewide services.

These projects may be contacting your school in the coming months to assess and assist in educational presentations.

## In addition

If you are interested in these projects and their services, contact

Bruce Desonia, Health Policy and Services Division, DPHHS (Tel: 444-2457; Fax: 444-2606).

A confidential Montana hotline for domestic violence and sexual assault is operated 24 hours a day

(800-655-7867). For information on starting a local service, write the Sexual Violence Task Force of the Coalition Against Domestic Violence, Box 633, Helena, MT, 59624, or call Bruce Desonia. ■

## OPI issues \$1,000 scholarship challenge

Data from the Montana Youth Risk Behavior Survey show that high school students tend to engage in more health risk behaviors as they age. For example, seniors drink alcohol, use tobacco, and engage in sex at a greater rate than ninth graders. Unfortunately students receive less ongoing health

education during their last two years in high school.

In order to involve students in a self-study of contemporary health issues and to facilitate teacher-led classroom discussions of these issues, OPI's Division of Health Enhancement and Safety is issuing a \$1,000 challenge for juniors and seniors in Montana's high schools.

Called "AIDS Issues in Society," the challenge is designed to be part of assigned classwork in senior government or junior and senior English classes. Students in participating classes will develop and write an essay presenting their views on how the issues surrounding HIV/AIDS have impacted society.

Six winning essays will be chosen out of those submitted to OPI. Their authors will share the \$1,000 scholarship fund and be honored by Governor Racicot and Superintendent Keenan at an awards ceremony in Helena.

Since the challenge is part of assigned classwork, each school can ensure that the information students receive is age-appropriate and consistent with the district's health enhancement curriculum. Deadline for submission to OPI is March 7, 1997. ■

## Virtual reality, continued

(Continued from page 7)

Silicon Graphic computers, my project needed to use what NCSA scientists termed "very low-end equipment." So, I am developing a unit that will let my students create 3D images of real objects and landscapes by taking photographs for both eyes and merging them together with red/blue anaglyph glasses. They will also use an Apple QuickTake camera to develop 360-degree panoramic movies.

All of this should be possible on my PowerMac, while giving my students the chance to understand the basic concepts of VR and take a closer look at their world.

## Future plans

Our group of 12 educators met

again this past October to work on curriculum development and to share progress reports. We plan to meet again in March and next summer for further collaboration.

All of our group's completed projects will be web-based and developed with the creation of a shared repository of images in mind; those images will be stored at the NCSA and available to other teachers.

## Information available

Information on VR, project participants, scheduled speakers, and much more can be found at NCSA's website for this workshop. Feel free to explore at <http://gallen.ncsa.uiuc.edu:2005>. Bob Fixen has posted photos from the

summer workshop at <http://www.mathmontana.edu/~fixen/ncsapics/sum96.html>. ■

—Barb Andersen, Elementary Teacher, Kalispell School District

If you have questions or want to observe virtual reality in Andersen's classroom, feel free to contact her at Peterson Elementary School (tel: 756-5067; email: barba@cyberport.net). Peterson's students will be posting their 3D images on their school's web page: <http://www.cyberport.net/users/peterson>

"Field Notes" is a forum for Montana educators, students, and parents. Views in Field Notes do not necessarily represent views of the Office of Public Instruction.



# NetDay Huntley Project

## Volunteers wire entire district in one day

October 26, 1996 was NetDay Huntley Project. Over 75 volunteers came to pull six miles of cable. Yes six miles! We pulled two runs of category five cable to nearly every classroom and office in five buildings for voice and data. We also pulled coaxial cable for video in two buildings.

### How did it happen?

How did we do that? Volunteers and

experts working side by side, that's how it happens, and did it happen!

From staff and volunteers crawling in three inches of sand in a four foot crawl space of the elementary school to the United States Air Force crew of nine, drilling and crushing through rebar and concrete in the junior high school, it was a great show of community pride and commitment.

How did this all come to pass? Of course a "concert" of this magnitude does not just HAPPEN. No, it takes weeks of fund raising, getting business and organizational sponsorships, finding experts, analyzing, and learning.

This project is worth more than \$40,000 to our district. Furthermore, the project was done without any federal funds, without any state funds, and without a dollar from our local

for our students. We did it for the children and for the school staff. We did it for our community.

### Future plans

Where do we go from here? The next steps will be to secure alternative funding so that we can purchase routers, hubs, servers, a new phone system, and related hardware. As funds are generated, and pieces and parts are purchased, we will continue to move forward. Huntley Project is

dedicated to technology!

Keep watching as we continue to advance forward.

### What about other schools

Can your district do that too? Certainly. But, it's going to take a champion, someone who can dedicate their heart to the advancement of technology, a person who can focus on making it happen. It takes the support of administration. It takes EFFORT!

If you want a video of our day, send us a blank tape and we'll

dub our NetDay video diary for you. If you need encouragement or any other help, please call me.

**This project is worth more than \$40,000 to our district.**

**Furthermore, the project was done without any federal funds, without any state funds, and without a dollar from our local school budget!**

I'll try to help. Just remember to be patient; the chances are that I'm engrossed in another exciting endeavor for Huntley Project Schools. ■

—Libby Henneberry, NetDay Huntley Organizer and public relations person extraordinaire, Huntley Project Schools

Libby can be reached at (Tel: 967-2839; email: Libby@metnet.mt.gov).

# NetDay MONTANA

<http://www.metnet.mt.gov/NetDay/NetDay.html>

school budget! Oh yes, and without any politicians or dignitaries being here!

### Reason for participation

So why did Huntley Project go to all this effort? Well, because this is what we needed to do to move toward being able to fully embrace technology opportunities

# Montana's top educators in 1996 honored

## Keenan presents Milken National Educator Awards

In a wave of surprise announcements that rippled across the state between September 25-27, four unsuspecting Montana educators experienced the shock—and delight—of their careers.



Dr. Whitehead talks to a student

During period, four outstanding elementary school educators learned from Superintendent Nancy Keenan that they had been chosen to receive the 1996 Milken Family Foundation National Educator Awards. Each awardee receives \$25,000 with no strings attached. The four recipients first learned of their selection in unannounced assemblies held at their respective schools.

Keenan, who arrived at each of the four schools to make the announcement in person, said

"These teachers and administrators are truly dedicated to quality education for Montana students. It is only appropriate that they should receive these awards where they contribute so much every day—in their school."

### Award recipients

The four educators who received the 1996 awards are Doug Crosby, a teacher at Cherry Valley School in Polson; Robin Pierce Richter, a teacher at Billings's Garfield School; Marilyn Delger, principal at Hawthorne School in Bozeman; and Dr. Bruce Whitehead, Hellgate Elementary principal in Missoula.

### The awards program

In Montana, as in the 31 other participating states, an anonymous blue ribbon panel assembled by the state education agency selected the state's top educators in grades K-6. Educators can neither apply for the honor, nor be nominated for it.

The Montana awards program is sponsored by

the Milken Family Foundation in cooperation with the Office of Public Instruction (OPI).

The program is designed to give public recognition and financial

reward to teachers, principals, and other education professionals who are making outstanding

(Continued on page 12)

## MEA names Montana Teacher of the Year

Kimberly Geraud, math teacher at Glasgow High School was selected the Montana Teacher of the Year.

This was the first year that the Montana Education Association administered the teacher of the year program.

The other finalists are Robin

Richter, Garfield Elementary School in Billings and Kathleen McIntosh of CRM in Great Falls.

"It is always a pleasure to see recognition of this type, especially to such deserving teachers," said Keenan. "They make education in Montana look and be an excellent service to our children." ■





"Dispatches" are updates by Office of Public Instruction staff. Staff members may be reached at the phone numbers listed or by writing them at the Office of Public Instruction, P.O. Box 202501, Helena, MT 59620-2501.

**Division of  
Academic and Professional  
Services**  
**Linda Peterson, Administrator**

**Curriculum and Assessment**  
**Jan Hahn, Specialist**  
444-3714  
jhahn@opi.mt.gov

## Montana's Aesthetic Literacy continues to engage students

Having seen the power of aesthetic literacy to motivate students and invigorate teaching, none of Montana's ten schools of Aesthetic Literacy intend to drop the program, although U.S. Department of Education funding is no longer available.

Both Hawthorne Elementary in Bozeman and Bigfork Elementary have conducted fundraisers in order to keep their guest artists coming and their students dancing, acting, writing, and making art and music.

At C.S. Porter Middle School their aesthetic literacy program proved so successful that the concept is spreading to other grade levels.

Several Missoula businesses are displaying the carousel animals made by the students at Lewis and Clark, and students are eager to engage in another all-school project.

Billings Central has continued their two-period aesthetic literacy block with new teachers.

## New schools adopt Framework

In addition, many schools that were not designated "Schools of Aesthetic Literacy" are now teaching cycles from the Framework. For example, the Hinsdale Schools, K-12, have experienced two "all-school" cycles this year.

One of those cycles, called "Labor of Love," focused on the question: *Are there actions in our lives that determine the type of society in which we live?* Students read stories, studied heroic people, listened to ballads, wrote poems, made gifts, charted acts of kindness, visited a rest home, composed songs, and learned many skills as they focused on the acts of love that shape society.

During the second cycle, Hinsdale students studied the Renaissance, following many of the suggestions found in the cycles submitted by Bozeman's Hawthorne School and printed in the new *Curriculum Cycles* set now available.

## Framework Resources

Copies of the new Framework for Aesthetic Literacy *Curriculum Cycles* and *Implementation Guide* are now available. The *Curriculum Cycles* represent the work of the ten Schools of Aesthetic Literacy which piloted the Framework during the 1995-96 school year. The *Implementation Guide* describes the schools' programs and includes information that might help convince members of your community to adopt an Aesthetic Literacy program. A videotape about these projects is also available from OPI. Call me if you would like copies.

The *Implementation Guide* also contains the phone numbers, addresses, and names of several staff members of the Schools of Aesthetic Literacy. Please contact these schools to arrange a visit or to have a pilot school staff member come to your school. The Framework for Aesthetic Literacy can continue to pay for those visitations until the grant is expended.

## Programs for at-risk students

I recommend using aesthetic literacy as the focus of a Title I Schoolwide Project, for the encounter-learn-create cycles of aesthetic literacy have been found particularly effective with at-risk students.

The following ambassadors are cross-trained in aesthetic literacy and Title I Schoolwide Planning: Chris Brewer—Kalispell; Sherill Dolezilek—Townsend; Tammy Elser—Arlee; Ed Harris—Billings; Brandy Howey—Hinsdale; Karen Kaufman—Missoula; Margaret Grant Scott—Missoula; and Pete Shea—Browning.

## Keep me informed

Please share your comments and stories about using one of the curriculum cycles, teaching aesthetic literacy, or integrating the arts with me.

If you do not have a copy of the first set of *Curriculum Cycles* and the *Instructional Guide*, please call. The original cycles are not repeated in the new set. The first *Instructional Guide* contains background information on the concepts of aesthetic literacy, multiple intelligences, and inquiry-based instruction, as well as samples of block schedules.

## Opera training in Montana

You may have read about Bigfork Elementary's Opera, which was performed for the sixth successful season last January. Well, the program that trained Bigfork teachers Karen Kolar and Sandee Sauer, *The Metropolitan Opera Guild's Education at the Met: Creating Original Opera Program* is now scheduling a training session in Missoula for this coming summer. Watch for dates, times and costs in an upcoming *Montana Schools*.

This past summer, teachers from Bryant School in Helena attended the training program and intend to help their students produce an opera for the first time this year.

## NCTE Regional Conference

Portland will host the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) Northwest Regional

Conference on March 2-4, 1997. Mark that date on your calendars and start making your travel plans for Oregon!

## NCTE Writing Contest

Lauren Fay of Bozeman High and Garrett Hellenthal of Billings West High received the 1996 NCTE Achievement Awards in Writing. Their teachers, Katy Paynich and Sue Bach, submitted their names last January, supervised them as they wrote an impromptu theme, and selected one other sample of their writing to be sent to the NCTE.

This year's deadline for submitting nominations is January 23, 1997. Depending on school size, each high school may select up to four juniors whose writing shows depth of thought, originality, clarity, command of the language, and power to inform and move the audience. Each year, the winners' names are printed in a booklet that is sent to directors of admissions in 3,000 colleges and universities. The winners also receive certificates of commendation.

To nominate students, teachers need only supervise the writing of the impromptu theme, select one sample of each student's writing—either poetry or prose—that best reflects the five criteria listed above, and send both to Montana's state coordinator. The coordinator is responsible for organizing a panel to evaluate all the state entries and select Montana's two entries for the national contest.

To enter and receive this year's impromptu topic, please contact me or the state coordinator, Tammi Allison, 127 South 5th West #1, Missoula, MT 59801 for a nomination form.

## Writing contest for eighth graders

NCTE also sponsors a writing contest for eighth graders called Promising Young Writers. The rules and the process are similar for this contest. The deadline for nominations is January 10, 1997, and the state coordinator is Steven Smith, 158 Firehill Road, Outlook, MT 59252.

**Instructional Technology and Gifted & Talented Education**  
**Michael Hall, Specialist**  
444-4422  
mhall@opi.mt.gov

## Websites for teachers

The Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory (NWREL) in Portland, Oregon, has posted five homepages for and by teachers in the northwest. As a part of their Northwest Educational Technology Consortium (NETC) grant, NWREL asked educators in the region to develop and maintain homepages on the following topics: multi-media in the classroom, getting started with multi-media, gifted education, assessment, and educational technology.

You can access the sites by going to the NWREL NETC homepage at <http://www.netc.org> or directly by using the addresses listed with each site.

## Multi-media in the classroom

This site is developed and moderated by Chuck Wahle, Educational Technology Coordinator for Ellensburg Public Schools, Ellensburg, Washington: [http://www.netc.org/web\\_mod/multimedia/](http://www.netc.org/web_mod/multimedia/)

In addition, Jeannie Wray from Blackfoot, Idaho, developed and is moderating a novices' site for getting started with multi-media. The site is at: [http://www.netc.org/web\\_mod/leap/](http://www.netc.org/web_mod/leap/)

## Educational technology research

The educational technology research and practice site is developed and moderated by Darlene Hartman-Hallam, Technology Director, Lander, Wyoming: [http://www.netc.org/web\\_mod/ed.tech/](http://www.netc.org/web_mod/ed.tech/)

## Gifted Education Connection

I developed and am moderating this site. It is located at: [http://www.netc.org/web\\_mod/gifted/ed/](http://www.netc.org/web_mod/gifted/ed/) The site contains resources on hot topics in gifted education, connections to resource people both in the Northwest and across the nation, and connections to other gifted education websites.

## Assessment, Benchmarks and Standards

This is a site developed and moderated by John Rusyniak, Director of Technology, Tok, Alaska: [http://www.netc.org/web\\_mod/assessment/\(NETC\)](http://www.netc.org/web_mod/assessment/(NETC))

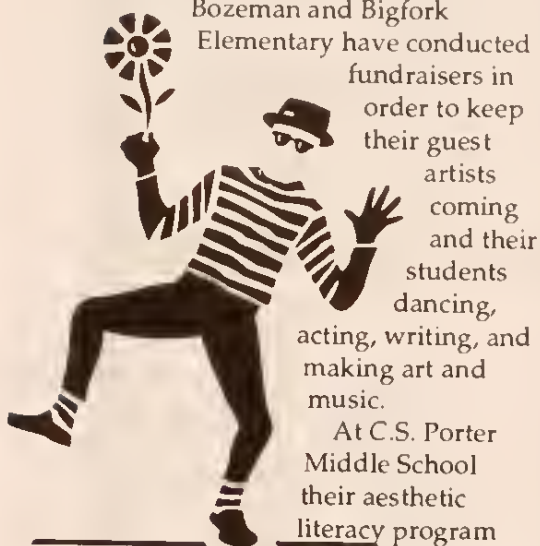
**Division of  
Health Enhancement and Safety**  
**Spencer Sartorius, Administrator**

**Nutrition Education and Training**  
**Katie Bark, Coordinator**  
994-5641  
uhdkb@montana.edu

## School-Based Nutrition Education

Nutrition education is often viewed as preventative—it helps young children develop healthy eating habits that allow them to live healthily their entire life. But children can also reap immediate benefits, especially those who frequently need to decide what to eat with little adult supervision. Nutrition education teaches children to decipher food labels, evaluate the nutritive value of foods they see on television, order a healthy meal at a restaurant, and plan balanced and nutritious snacks and meals for themselves.

For a number of reasons, schools





are the ideal place to teach these skills: A comprehensive school health program can reach the majority of children and adolescents in a community; schools have skilled personnel available; and a school's meal program can provide many opportunities for children to practice healthy eating.

## School health program guidelines

By giving them the skills, social support, and environmental reinforcement they need to adopt long-term, healthy eating behaviors, school health programs can help children maintain good health and learn more. But how, exactly does a school-based health program do that?

Recently, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDCP) collaborated with experts from many universities and national agencies to develop guidelines for schools to promote healthy eating among school-age youths. These seven guidelines are summarized below and can be used to implement and/or evaluate your school health program.

- ✓ Adopt a coordinated school nutrition policy that promotes healthy eating through classroom lessons and a supportive school environment.
- ✓ Implement nutrition education as part of a sequential, comprehensive school health education curriculum designed to help students adopt healthy eating behaviors.
- ✓ Provide nutrition education through developmentally appropriate, culturally relevant, fun participatory activities that involve social learning strategies.
- ✓ Coordinate school food service with nutrition education with other components of the comprehensive school health program to reinforce messages on healthy eating.
- ✓ Provide staff involved with nutrition education with adequate preservice and ongoing inservice training that focuses on teaching strategies for behavior change.
- ✓ Involve family members and the community in supporting and reinforcing nutrition education.
- ✓ Regularly evaluate the effectiveness of the school health program in promoting healthy eating, and change the program as appropriate to increase its effectiveness.

Schools can find out about some strategies for carrying out these seven guidelines in the report, *Guidelines for School Health Programs to Promote Lifelong Healthy Eating*, by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Contact me to obtain a copy.

**Health Enhancement**  
Rick Chiotti, Specialist  
444-1963  
rchiotti@opi.mt.gov

## Communiqué discontinued

In an effort to streamline the information sharing process and to contain costs, the OPI Health Enhancement and Safety Division will no longer be producing the *Communiqué* newsletter. Information previously included in the *Communiqué* will be provided to school personnel via *Montana Schools*.

Schools can find the monthly report on AIDS statistics from the Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services (DPHHS) both on METNET and the Montana AIDS Hotline (800-233-6668).

If you need more information, contact me.

Laurie Kops leaves OPI

This fall, Laurie Kops decided to face the myriad challenges posed by an active life and growing children on a full-time basis, instead of just before and after work. An unfortunate by-product of Laurie's decision is that she is no longer working with us at OPI.

During her tenure at OPI, she contributed much to promoting quality education in Montana through her work in Health Enhancement education and school-based HIV/AIDS education.

Although we greatly miss Laurie's knowledge, positive attitude, willingness to work hard, and irreverent humor, we also wish her well.

## Resources

Skills-based programs for providing character education and preventing violence and alcohol/drug abuse are available from Lions-Quest.

The programs—*Skills for Growing* (K-5), *Skills for Adolescents* (6-8) and *Skills for Action* (9-12)—emphasize character education, communication and decision-making skills, and linkages among the home, school and community.

Lions-Quest touts evaluation studies that both show productive results from the programs, and demonstrate that the programs meet the criteria for prevention curricula delineated in the U.S. Department of Education's *Drug Prevention Curricula: A Guide to Selection and Implementation* (1988).

For more information on the three programs, contact Quest International, 1984 Coffman Road, PO Box 4850, Newark OH 43058-4850 (Tel: 800-446-2700; Fax: 614-522-6580). In Montana, you can write Gene Dillman, PO Box 175, Culbertson MT 59218.

**Traffic Education**  
Curt Hahn, Specialist  
444-4432  
chahn@opi.mt.gov

## Teacher approval renewal

If your teaching certificate will expire in June so will your approval to teach Traffic Education. You must renew, even if you have a minor and a "99" endorsement on your Montana teaching certificate.

## Traffic education reimbursement

Schools that complete high school traffic education programs between July 1, 1996, and June 30, 1997, will receive their reimbursements in August 1997. The anticipated reimbursement is about \$90 per pupil. Be sure to submit your reimbursement upon completion of each PROGRAM you conduct.

## 1997 Traffic Education Conference

The 1997 State Traffic Education Conference will be held April 27-29 at Montana's Fairmont Hot Springs. MSU-Northern will offer one semester credit, and OPI will offer 15 renewal units. Consider making your plans to attend; it's a good idea to submit a travel request to your school administrator now. Registration information will be mailed in March.

## Non-public school students

Legislative intent is clear; school districts serve as the vehicle to make traffic education available to all youth who meet minimum age requirements. Montana Administrative Rules (ARM 10.13.307 e.) reads..."An approved traffic education program for student drivers must...be scheduled so that a sufficient number of courses are provided to allow every eligible youth within the school jurisdiction an opportunity to enroll..." In other words, if students live within the boundaries of your school district, you must allow them to enroll in your traffic education program, regardless of their schooling status. You may, however, charge them a student fee that covers the actual cost of the program.

Historically, this approach has been very effective; public schools can provide qualified instructors and quality service to most every community across the state. In addition, the new Cooperative Driver Testing Program has expanded that service, allowing certified traffic educators to administer the state driver license tests to their students

## Severe ADHD and driving

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) sponsored a study to assess whether Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) affected driving performance. The results of this study reveal that young adults who have been diagnosed as severe ADHD during childhood did have higher percentages of conviction for certain moving violations than their comparison group. The report summarizes additional analyses on years of driving experience, sanc-

tions received, and stimulant treatment histories.

Limited copies of the report are available from the Office of Program Development and Evaluation, NHTSA, NTS-30, 400 Seventh Street, S.W., Washington, DC 20590 (fax: 202-366-7096).

## Highway safety and education

Another report reveals that the American public places great faith in traffic education and strongly favors a strong government role in keeping U.S. highways safe. No matter their age, 82 percent of those surveyed believed that driving behavior causes most traffic accidents and feel that more public education could reduce the number of serious injuries. They advocate increased public education in driving under the influence, reckless driving, running stop lights and signs, speeding, and tailgating. Eighty-six percent of those aged 16 and older consider driver education courses very important to train new drivers in safety.

Two-thirds think the federal government should provide financial support for high school driver education programs. The public believes the major responsibilities of the government should be education, regulation, enforcement, and research. To obtain a copy of the report, *NHTSA 1995 Customer Satisfaction Survey*, write to the Office of Program Development and Evaluation, NHTSA, NTS-30, 400 Seventh Street, S.W., Washington, DC 20590 (Fax: 202-366-7096).

## Kit to protect school bus riders

School bus crash data shows that children are more often fatally injured as pedestrians in school bus loading zones than as passengers on school buses. *Walk-Ride-Walk: Getting to School Safely* is a new program targeted to help protect school bus riders in grades K-6.

The boxed kit includes seven, one-half hour lessons with individual teacher's guides, three student videos, a course poster identifying the danger zones around a school bus, and videos and brochures for parents and school bus drivers. To obtain a kit for \$55 contact the National Safety Council (Tel: 800-621-7619; Fax: 708-285-0797) and mention product number 7319-19700-0000.

## Air bag safety

If you ride in a vehicle with air bags, try to keep as much distance between you and the air bag as possible; never sit or drive with your body leaning forward, close to the steering wheel or dashboard.

Remember the safest place for children is always in your vehicle's back seat. If children must ride in the front, always slide the seat back as far as possible.

Older children riding in the front seat should be secured by both lap and shoulder safety belts. Young children should be correctly buckled-up in a forward-facing safety seat.

Infants should never be placed in a rear-facing safety seat on the front seat of a car.



Listings in the Bulletin Board do not necessarily imply endorsement by the Office of Public Instruction.

## Student Contests

### Poster contest

This is a national contest for students in grades 4-6. The top three winners from each state will receive a \$1,000, \$500, or \$200 U.S. Savings Bond. Each state's winning entry is forwarded to Washington, D.C. for national judging.

Deadline is February 7, 1997. For an entry kit, call the Savings Bond marketing office (206-553-4537).

### Architectural design contest

The School of Architecture at the New Jersey Institute of Technology (NJIT) invites creative high school students to compete for major scholarships. The theme for this year's competition is "A Theater for Your Community." Projects must be submitted by April 1, 1997, but the contest registration deadline is January 31, 1997.

For an entry form contact NJIT (201-596-3080).

## Free resources

### Weights and measures curriculum

The first 50 fourth-grade teachers to call Marlene Wallis at OPI (444-3693) will receive a free 20-page unit on *Measurement in the Classroom*. This fourth grade weights and measures curriculum guide has been made available by the National Conference on Weights and Measures of Gaithersburg, MD. OPI received the guides from Jack Kane, Bureau Chief of the Weights and Measures Bureau of the Montana Department of Commerce.

### Pat Williams cleans house

While cleaning out his office, Congressman Pat Williams came across a number of boxes of paperback and pocket-size copies of the U.S. Constitution, *Our Flag, A Pictorial History of the Capitol and of Congress*, and a hardback volume detailing the acceptance and dedication of Jeanette Rankin's statue in the National Statuary Hall. The number of copies vary.

If you are interested in these resources call Beth Satre, OPI (444-4397). She will fill requests on a first-come, first-serve basis.

### Career development video

Polson High School's Career Development Project created an in-service training program entitled "Empowering Students to Succeed." The program consists of a training video, facilitator's guide, and activity packet, which are designed to present ideas to educators on how to implement a

successful, comprehensive career planning process for all students.

Contact Polson High School (Tel: 883-6314; Fax: 883-6330) for a free copy of this video and interactive training guide.

### DOE student aid applications

Every year the U.S. Department of Education gives high schools an opportunity to order bulk quantities of the *Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)*, which is required to apply for the federal student aid programs in the coming school year. To receive copies of the 1997-98 FAFSA, high schools must have a mailing list number on file with DOE.

To get a mailing list number, send a request on official school letterhead to Application Ordering System, U.S. Department of Education, Student Financial Assistance Programs, P.O. Box 96159, Washington, D.C. 20002-6159. Requests can also be faxed (202-205-0657).

## Student submissions

### Magazine needs student work

The Montana student literary/art magazine *Signatures from the Big Sky* is soliciting submissions for the next issue. Students should select and send their short stories, poems, essays, and drawings to the coordinator nearest their location.

For a list of coordinators or more information contact Shirley Olson (458-7063), Jan Hahn at OPI (444-3714), or Fran Morrow at the Montana Arts Council (444-6430). Deadline for submissions is February 1, 1997. Free copies of the magazine will be sent to the teachers and students whose work is selected.

## Grant competition for math teachers

### Toyota TIME grant competition

Toyota's Mathematics Education Trust announces a new grants program for teachers of mathematics made possible through a partnership between Toyota and the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics. Grants are awarded to teachers of mathematics in grades K-12 for innovative projects that enhance mathematics education within a school. Twenty (20) two-year grants, totaling up to \$200,000 will be awarded this year. They will be awarded at three levels: elementary, middle, and high school.

To apply for funding, qualified teachers must submit a proposal which meets specific requirements and guidelines. The deadline is January 10, 1997.

For an application form, contact Toyota TIME (tel: 888-573-TIME; email: toyotatime@nctm.org).

## Newsletter

Free materials for schools  
Connaught Education Services

# CALENDAR

## January

6: 55th Legislature Convenes in Helena  
9-10: Board of Public Education, Helena—Sandee Henselbecker, 444-0302  
12-13: Business Professional of America and DECA State Officer Planning Meeting and Proclamation Signing, Helena—Marion Reed, OPI, 444-3000  
23: Montana Council of Deans of Education, Helena—Dr. Randy Hitz, 994-6792  
23: NCTE Writing Contest Deadline—Jan Hahn, OPI, 444-3714  
30: School to Work Regional Conference, Helena—Anne Razeca, OCHE, 444-0313  
30-31: Certification Standards & Practices Advisory Council (CSPAC), Helena—Peter Donovan, 444-0301

## February

9-15: Business Professionals of America Week/DECA Week—Marion Reed, OPI, 444-3000  
15-17: WBEA, Billings—Marion Reed, OPI, 444-3000  
25: School-to-work Regional Conference, Missoula—Anne Razeca, OCHE, 444-0313

## March

2-4: DECA State Conference, Great Falls—Barb Robertson, 444-2411  
2-4: Business Professionals of America State Leadership Conference, Billings—Marion Reed, OPI, 444-3000  
2-4: DECA Career Development Conference, Great Falls—Marion Reed, OPI, 444-3000  
6-7: Board of Public Education,

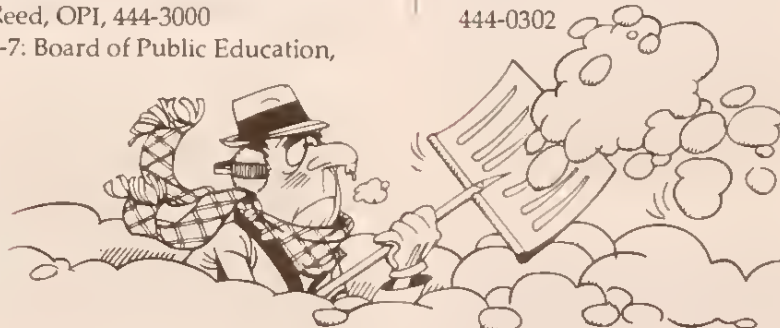
Helena—Sandee Henselbecker, 444-0302  
7: Northwest Montana Reading Conference, Kalispell—Kristy Ryan, or June Atkins, OPI, 444-3554  
16-18: FHA State Conference, Bozeman—Laurie Stelter, 444-2059  
27: Montana Council of Deans of Education, Helena—Dr. Randy Hitz, 994-6792

## April

2-4: Montana AGATE Meeting, Great Falls—Keith Davey, 791-2270  
4: State Geography Bee, Billings—Linda Peterson, OPI, 444-5726  
3-5: FFA State Conference, Great Falls—Sandy Thibault, MSU-Bozeman, 994-3691  
7-9: VICA State Leadership and Skills Conference, Havre  
10-11: Board of Public Education, Helena—Sandee Henselbecker, 444-0302  
25-29: Business Professionals of America National Leadership Conference, Orlando, FL—Marion Reed, OPI, 444-3000  
27-29: 1997 Traffic Education Conference, Fairmont Hot Springs—Curt Hahn, OPI, 444-4432

## May

4-9: International Reading Conference, Atlanta, GA—June Atkins, OPI, 444-3664  
22: Montana Council of Deans of Education, Great Falls—Dr. Randy Hitz, 994-6792  
22-23: Board of Public Education, Helena—Sandee Henselbecker, 444-0302



publishes a newsletter entitled *Free Materials for Schools and Libraries*, which provides educators and librarians with a reliable list of free materials and services.

The 16-page newsletter comes out five times a year and, according to its publisher, contains approximately 80-100 items which have been "examined by professional reviewers" and which are free to

schools. The index for the Sept. October issue references a broccoli coloring book, passport to traffic safety, and nutrition building block posters, to name a few.

Subscriptions to the newsletter are \$17 per year pre-paid. Contact the Connaught Education Services, P.O. Box 24069, Dept. 249, Seattle, WA 98124 (tel: 604-876-3377) for more information.

## Milken Awards

continued from page 9

contributions to education. The program's goals are to honor these educators as fully and publicly as possible, to increase public support for education, and to encourage the brightest students to become teachers.

"Teachers and principals are crucial to effective education,"

Keenan said.

"The Milken National Educator Award Program allows us to honor exceptional educators while increasing public awareness and support of their achievements. This program is part of an ongoing effort to recognize exceptional educators." ■

This document printed at government expense. 14,000 copies of this public document were produced and distributed at an estimated cost of 19 cents per copy.